

# RETURN

(71a)

To an ORDER of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, dated January 10, 1912, for a copy of all papers and correspondence relating to the negotiations that have been opened by the Government for improved trade arrangements with the British West Indies and British Guiana.

W. J. ROCHE,  
Secretary of State.

OTTAWA, January 16, 1912.

*Copy B.C.*

12705.

P. C. 2633.

*CERTIFIED COPY of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Royal Highness the Governor General on November 21, 1911.*

The Committee of the Privy Council have had under consideration the following memorandum, dated November 17, 1911, from the Minister of Trade and Commerce, with reference to trade relations between Canada and the West Indies:—

On August 9, 1909, a Royal Commission was issued by His Majesty King Edward VII., appointing the Right Honourable Lord Balfour, of Burleigh, Honourable William Stevens Fielding, Honourable William Paterson, Sir John Poynder Dickson Poynder, and Sir Daniel Morris, to enquire into the present conditions and future prospects of trade between Canada and the West Indian Colonies and to suggest measures for promoting closer trade relations between them, including the several subjects referred to in the Minute of the Privy Council of Canada of August 31, 1908, and also such matters as the improvement of transportation, a cheaper and more efficient telegraph system, and generally all such other matters as might appear best calculated to strengthen and expand commerce and communications between Canada and the West Indies.

The letter of instructions was issued to the Commissioners by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on August 18, 1909, in pursuance of which the work was undertaken and carried out. A report of this Commission was submitted on May 3, 1910, and included amongst many other recommendations, one for the establishment of reciprocal trade interchanges between the West Indies and Canada, and drew up a draft form of agreement between Canada and any one of the West Indian Colonies, providing in each case for a schedule of Canadian goods which should



2 GEORGE V., A. 1912

enjoy the benefits of the Customs Preferential Tariff when imported into the Colony, and a schedule of West Indian products which should enjoy the benefits of the Preferential Tariff when imported into Canada.

It appears from a despatch from Downing Street of July 22, 1911, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the recommendations of the Royal Commission have now been accepted in principle by the Legislatures of Trinidad, Barbados, British Guiana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica and Montserrat, that the Legislature of Grenada has deferred consideration of the question as suggested in paragraph 93 of the report of the Commission, and that no action has been taken in the matter by the Legislatures of Jamaica, British Honduras, Bermuda and Bahamas, whose circumstances were separately discussed in the report of the Commission.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies intimates that it is essential for the proper settlement of the question at issue that the powers of the delegates representing the several West Indian Colonies at the proposed conference with the representatives of the Dominion should be clearly understood, and submits for the consideration of the Canadian Ministers a scheme for the organization of this conference. Subject and subsequent to the approval of the Canadian Ministers, he proposes to invite the administrations of the several colonies concerned to appoint representatives with the powers indicated in this scheme.

The scheme proposed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies is as follows:—

Each separate West Indian Administration desiring to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission shall appoint one representative. The Dominion Government shall appoint such representatives as they may think necessary, and the Secretary of State may, if he thinks fit, nominate one or more persons to attend the Conference, but such person or persons will not vote on any question before the Conference. Each administration shall provide the expenses of its representative, and any necessary joint expenses shall be equally divided between the Canadian Government and the West Indian Governments concerned.

The Conference so constituted shall consider the Draft Agreement and Schedules appended to the report of the Royal Commission. They may make such amendments and alterations in the Agreement and Schedules as may be agreed upon.

Any difference arising will be decided by the majority of votes, subject to the right of the Canadian representatives to declare that any proposal then under discussion will not be acceptable to the Canadian Government.

A form of agreement shall, if the majority of the Conference so decide, be drawn up and signed by such representatives as are willing to recommend to their respective administrations the conclusion of such an agreement. This agreement will be submitted for acceptance or rejection as a whole to the several Legislatures represented at the Conference.

The agreement shall not come into force until it has been adopted by the Legislatures concerned and approved by the Dominion and Home Governments.

The Conference may also discuss regulations for securing uniformity in the treatment of goods entitled to preference under the contemplated agreement, and any other relevant questions of a like nature.

The Committee, on the recommendation of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, advise that Your Royal Highness may be pleased to inform the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the Canadian Government approved of the scheme proposed and will be prepared to meet the representatives of the several West Indian Colonies at the earliest convenient opportunity, if possible, during the month of March, 1912; also that the Dominion Government would be



SESSIONAL PAPER No. 71 *A*

glad to welcome the Representatives of the West Indian Colonies at Ottawa, or if that be deemed impossible, will send representatives, to such meeting place in the West Indies as may be selected.

All which is respectfully submitted for approval.

(Signed) RODOLPHE BOUDREAU,  
*Clerk of the Privy Council.*

The Honourable  
The Minister of Trade and Commerce.



